

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 30, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. FOOT made the following

R E P O R T .

[To accompany Bill S. 111.]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of Aaron H. Palmer, having had the same under consideration, and concurring in the views of this committee at the first session of the last Congress, as explained in their report of that session, adopt that report as their own at the present session; which report is as follows:

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, APRIL 16, 1858.

*The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the memorial of Aaron Haight Palmer, make the following report:*

That the memorial of the petitioner was presented to the Senate by Hon. J. M. Clayton on the 18th of January, 1855, and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations; and that it was subsequently printed, by order of the Senate, as miscellaneous document No. 10, 2d session 33d Congress.

In presenting the memorial, Mr. Clayton made the following remarks:

“I present the petition of Aaron Haight Palmer, praying compensation for services rendered by him in communication, and by and under the direction, and with the approbation of three Secretaries of State, I believe, and of several committees of this body. I shall not undertake to state the matters set forth in the petition; the committee, of course, will inquire into them. I only wish to say, as an act of justice to this gentleman, that, from all the information which I have had an opportunity of receiving heretofore in another position, I believe he is entitled to more credit for getting up the Japan expedition than any other man I have heard of. He has thrown more light on it, and given more information on the subject to the State Department, and to the Congress of the United States, than any one else. His merits, however, in this particular, will be canvassed by those to whom the petition will be referred. I move its reference to the Committee on Foreign Relations. I also ask that it may be printed; which motions were agreed to.”—(Congressional Globe January 18, 1855, page 307.)

The memorial sets forth that the petitioner has devoted many years to the collection of valuable information and statistics in relation to the geography, productive resources, trade, commerce, &c., of the independent oriental nations, and particularizes at great length what he had done. He states, among other things, that in January, 1848, he inclosed, in a letter from New York to President Polk, a memoir, stating the importance of operating commercial intercourse with those nations; that in the following February, by invitation of the Secretary of the Treasury, he visited Washington for the purpose of promoting the action of our government in furtherance of the views and suggestions contained in the document sent to the President. That, in consequence of action of the Senate on the papers furnished by him, he was detained in Washington, laboring for the government in the superintendence of the printing of the papers, until September of that year.

That, in 1849, he completed a series of papers containing geographical descriptions of many oriental nations, enumerated in his memorial, among them the empire of Japan. That he forwarded to Mr. Clayton, then Secretary of State, a brief *resumé* of said papers, which Mr. Clayton deemed of sufficient importance to cause them to be published. That he afterwards submitted to Mr. Clayton a plan for opening Japan, which was ultimately adopted, and formed the basis of the policy of our government in the late maritime expedition under command of Commodore Perry. That he had several interviews with that officer before he sailed, and furnished him with all the information possible; and that the last one was by special written request of the Secretary of the Navy.

Mr. Palmer further represents that, in pursuance of certain resolutions, presented by Mr. Hamlin, chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, and adopted by the Senate, on the 21st of February, 1850, calling on the Secretary of State for information respecting the barbarous treatment of shipwrecked American seamen in Japan; also, in regard to the independent oriental nations, and their capabilities for a profitable American commerce, &c., he was employed by Mr. Clayton to assist him in preparing his answer to said resolutions, and that he was diligently employed for about three months in that business.

The memorial concludes by asking a reasonable compensation for the services thus rendered to the United States.

No action was taken by the Committee on Foreign Relations upon the memorial in 1855, and on the 19th of May, 1856, it was again referred to the same committee.

No report upon it was made to the Senate, and on the 9th of December, 1856, the Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from the further consideration of it, and it was referred to the Committee on Commerce, which committee was, on the 12th of February, 1857, discharged from its further consideration, and it was referred to the Committee on Claims; but the then near approach to the end of the session prevented any definite action, and on the 5th of January, 1858, it was again referred to this committee.

On examining the papers, your committee find among them a

report, evidently prepared by Mr. Clayton, while the memorial was before the Committee on Foreign Relations, and in his particular charge, as a member of that committee.

There is appended to it a note in the handwriting of Mr. Clayton, addressed to the clerk of the committee, in the following words :

“Mr. Montague will please file these papers, for the present, in committee.

“J. M. CLAYTON.

“JULY 10, 1856.”

The petition is indorsed by the clerk of the committee as follows :

“The within was sent to me by the Hon. J. M. Clayton, with the accompanying note, dated July 10, 1856.

“E. T. MONTAGUE,  
“*Clerk Committee on Foreign Relations.*”

It is a well-known fact that Mr. Clayton's health was such, during the summer of 1856, as to prevent him from attending the Senate, except occasionally ; and the inference is that he had prepared the report, intending to submit it to the committee, but that his failing health prevented, and he therefore sent it to the clerk to be filed, with a view of submitting it when his health would allow his attendance on the committee ; but before that opportunity occurred Mr. Clayton died.

Your committee, therefore, insert the report thus prepared as a part of this report, and for the additional reason that Mr. Clayton, from his official position, knew better the actual services of Mr. Palmer than any other member of the Senate.

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*The Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom was referred the memorial of Aaron Haight Palmer, “praying for compensation for services in collecting valuable information and statistics in relation to the geography, productive resources, trade, commerce, &c., of the independent oriental nations,” having had the same under consideration, beg leave to report :*

That, from an attentive examination of the memorial and accompanying documents submitted to the committee by Mr. Palmer, it satisfactorily appears that he has been diligently occupied for a considerable number of years in procuring, with great research and untiring industry, from original and authentic sources, (in certain instances from oriental rulers themselves,) a large amount of new and valuable information, geographical, political, and commercial, in regard to those eastern nations, especially Japan, and their capabilities for a profitable American commerce.

That he has, on various occasions between the years 1846 and 1851, addressed interesting and valuable communications on the subject to the House of Representatives and to three Presidents and Secretaries of State, which have been printed as valuable public documents, and are generally considered as important contributions to our knowledge

of several of the comparatively unknown maritime nations of the east, (particularly Japan,) and have proved of high interest and value to our government in opening and extending our commercial relations with several of those eastern countries.

Among those contributions of Mr. Palmer, his "plan for opening Japan," submitted by him to the Secretary of State on the 17th of September, 1849, which met with the Secretary's entire approval, appears to have been subsequently adopted as the basis of the policy of our government in the expedition and mission to the ruler of that empire, so successfully accomplished by Commodore Perry, in accordance, it would seem, with the leading views, suggestions, and recommendations contained therein.

Your committee also find that Mr. Palmer, between 1842 and 1853, addressed a series of letters, communications, and contributions, including copies of his printed documents, to high functionaries in Japan, having for their object the opening of that empire to American intercourse and commerce, and which he has transmitted, from time to time during the aforementioned periods, to Nagasaki, through the only safe and reliable channels of communicating with that secluded and mysterious empire. It may reasonably be presumed these have had an important influence and agency at that court in preparing the way for the successful result of Commodore Perry's mission.

Mr Palmer, it appears, has also printed, at different times, 2,250 copies of his memoirs, at his own expense, for distribution to senators, members of Congress, and executive officers of the government; that, at the request of several senators, he prepared a large outline map, to illustrate his memoirs on Siberia, &c., printed by order of the Senate in 1848, and, in consequence of the delay at the time in the printing of the Senate documents, he claims compensation for nine months' services, in which he was necessarily detained during that year in the preparation of the map and correcting the proof-sheets of the usual, as well as extra, numbers of copies of said memoir ordered by the Senate; and also for four months' services in preparing a report, illustrated by a special chart, for the Secretary of State, under a resolution of the Senate of the 16th January, 1850.

In view of the highly meritorious and valuable services thus rendered by Mr. Palmer, and their important results in preparing the way for opening new marts in the east to our commerce, your committee have come to the conclusion that he is justly entitled to thousand dollars in compensation for such services and expenses, and they accordingly report a bill allowing the same, and recommend its passage.

Your committee, after a careful examination of the large mass of papers accompanying the memorial, both printed and in manuscript, have come to the conclusion that the petitioner is entitled to relief; and they therefore report a bill in his favor making an appropriation of the sum of three thousand dollars.